

**MARVEL**

**#4**

MARK WAID • MIKE DEL MUNDO

*EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES*

# THE AVENGERS®





**MARVEL**  
VARIANT EDITION

# AVENGERS #4







THEY'RE  
COMING.

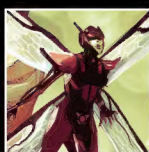
I CAN HEAR THEM SPLINTERING  
THE *TIME BARRIER* OVER AND  
OVER WITH THE GRACELESSNESS  
OF HAZAEL'S ARMY LEVELING  
THE *PHILISTINE WALL*.

IF THEY BELIEVE  
I *FEAR* THEM, THEY  
ARE *MISTAKEN*.

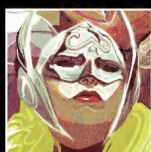


And there came a day, a day unlike any other, when Earth's Mightiest Heroes found themselves united against a common threat. On that day, the Avengers were born--to fight the foes no single super hero could withstand!

# THE AVENGERS



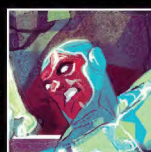
**WASP**  
Nadia Pym



**THOR**  
Jane Foster



**CAPTAIN AMERICA**  
Sam Wilson



**VISION**



**SPIDER-MAN**  
Peter Parker



**HERCULES**


The Vision traveled through time to abduct the infamous villain Kang as a baby, hoping that Kang would never grow up to terrorize Vision and his fellow Avengers. The resulting paradox created dozens of vengeful Kangs all out for blood.

The Avengers barely survived the encounter and were forced to return the baby Kang to his point of origin to stem the flood of alternate Kangs. But they're far from finished with the time-traveling villain, and Captain America has a new plan to take him down for good...

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The Avengers created by **Stan Lee & Jack Kirby**





I AM KNOWN  
AS KANG THE  
CONQUEROR--

--A BIT *REDUNDANTLY*,  
GIVEN THE ORIGINS OF  
THE NAME "*KANG*,"  
WHICH ARE NOT  
MINE TO REVEAL--

--AND I MAKE MY  
HOME AT THE END  
OF TIME.

MY CITADEL ORBITS THE  
LAST DYING STAR. OUTSIDE  
ITS WALLS, ENTROPY  
GRADUALLY SLOWS EVERY  
ATOM, EVERY MOLECULE,  
INTO IMMOBILITY.

THE ONLY SOUND  
IS OF ELECTRONS  
STRUGGLING TO  
COMPLETE ONE  
LAST CIRCUIT.

IT IS A SILENCE THAT  
COULD EXIST ONLY  
HERE, AND IT IS FAR  
MORE PEACEFUL THAN  
THE NOISE OF  
HISTORY'S MARCH.

HERE, I AM THE  
EMPEROR OF *NOTHING*.  
BUT ELSEWHEN...



MANY EMPIRES HAVE  
I, ACROSS THE  
SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM--



--FAR TOO NUMEROUS  
TO OVERSEE, EVEN FOR A  
MAN WHO CAN EXIST  
NEAR-SIMULTANEOUSLY  
ACROSS THE MILLENNIA.

MY GENERALS, IF YOU'LL  
FORGIVE THE ANTIQUATED  
TERM, SERVE ME WELL AND  
ARE REWARDED HANDSOMELY  
FOR MAINTAINING  
A *SUPPLY LINE*.




THE 17TH CENTURY *DIAMOND*  
*MINERS* FUND THE 45TH CENTURY  
*MUNITIONS MAKERS*, WHOSE  
ARTILLERY REMOVES THE  
36TH CENTURY *RESISTANCE*,  
AND SO ON AND SO ON.



IT IS A CLOCKWORK SYSTEM  
THAT TOOK CENTURIES TO  
CRYSTALLIZE, BUT POWER PLACED  
IN RELATIVELY TRUSTWORTHY HANDS  
REAPS A MAGNIFICENT REWARD:





THE ABILITY TO SEE  
YOUR OWN *HOMETIME*  
FOR WHAT IT IS.

IN MY CASE, BILLIONS OF MEWLING,  
NAMELESS, FACELESS WEAKLINGS  
WHOSE ONLY CHALLENGE IS IN  
DECIDING WHICH TEAT TO SUCKLE.

A PLANET OF CIPHERS  
TOO INDOLENT TO RISE  
ABOVE THE *CROWD*. IN  
OTHER WORDS...

...NO *COMPETITION*.

EVERY AGE OF HUMANITY IS  
MARKED BY A MAN OF ACTION,  
ONE FOREVER REMEMBERED FOR  
HIS VISION AND WILL. A MAN  
*IMMORTAL*, HIS PRAISES  
RESONATING *ETERNALLY*  
ACROSS THE GALAXIES.

IT JUST DIDN'T  
KNOW IT YET.

THIS WOULD BE MY  
TIME. THE 31ST CENTURY  
BELONGED TO ME.

THE FIRST STEP WASN'T  
GEOGRAPHICAL, IT WAS  
*CHRONAL*--BUILDING A  
TIME-TRAVEL APPARATUS.

WHAT I WAS INVESTIGATING  
HAD BEEN OUTLAWED FOUR  
CENTURIES EARLIER FOLLOWING  
THE MYSTERIOUS "*RAYONNA  
PARADOX*," BUT WHO WAS  
GOING TO STOP ME?

ORDINARILY, A  
NEUROSTIMULATED BRAIN  
CAN ABSORB A DECADE'S  
WORTH OF KNOWLEDGE  
IN AN HOUR.

DRINKING IN AND  
COMPREHENDING THE  
FORBIDDEN NOTES OF THE  
THOUSAND-YEARS-GONE  
VICTOR VON DOOM  
TOOK TWO MONTHS.



I BELIEVED--STILL BELIEVE--THAT A LEGEND REQUIRES *IMMORTALITY* TO SUSTAIN ITSELF. THIS BELIEF TOOK ME TO *ANCIENT EGYPT*, THE FIRST CIVILIZATION RUMORED TO HAVE *MASTERED ETERNAL LIFE*.

BOTH THE *QURAN* AND THE *NAG HAMMADI* TOLD OF LIFE-EXTENDING *ELIXIRS*, WHILE THE TEACHINGS OF *OSIRIS* PROMISED PERPETUAL EXISTENCE.

ALL *NONSENSE*, AS IT TURNED OUT--SO I MYSELF CREATED SOMETHING "ETERNAL."

LOCALIZING MYSELF AS A *PHARAOH* NAMED *RAMA-TUT*, I USED MY *TECHNOLOGY* TO CREATE MY FIRST *ARMY*, 100,000 STRONG.

UNDER MY DIRECTION, THEY BUILT GREAT *PYRAMIDS* IN WHICH TO STORE *ARTIFACTS* FOR CENTURIES TO *COME...*


...ARTIFACTS OF MY DESIGN.

WEAPONS, COMPUTERS--*MAGIC* TO THEM. DEVICES DESIGNED TO WHIP THROUGH SUBSPACE, TO SHATTER *MOUNTAINS*.

ALL TO BE HIDDEN AWAY UNTIL I NEEDED THEM.





A vibrant, chaotic illustration depicting a scene within a timestream. Numerous pocket watches of various sizes and colors (green, blue, gold) are floating in the air, some showing different times. In the center, a large, muscular, reddish-brown figure with a beard and a red helmet-like headpiece stands prominently. To his right, a character in a red and gold suit with a helmet is visible. In the foreground, a character in a blue and silver suit with a helmet is shown in a dynamic pose, holding a green feather. To the left, a character in a green and gold suit with a helmet is also visible. The background is a mix of warm colors (red, orange, yellow) and cooler colors (blue, green), suggesting a complex, multi-dimensional environment. The overall style is reminiscent of comic book art.

MY TIME IN EGYPT  
DONE, I RETURNED  
HOME...

IT TOOK ME  
WEEKS TO SEIZE  
CONTROL.

RECALLING AN ABANDONED  
**TIMESUIT** DESIGN OF MINE, I  
REPLICATED IT TO FIT THE STYLE  
OF THE YEAR 4086 MORE  
COMMANDINGLY THAN WOULD  
THAT OF AN EGYPTIAN KING.

...AND FOR THE FIRST  
AND LAST TIME,  
SUFFERED **HUBRIS**.


I HAD NOT APPRECIATED  
THE MIGHT OF THE  
**TIMESTREAM**, HAD NOT  
TRAVERSED IT **RESPECTFULLY**,  
AND AS SUCH HAD BEEN  
**PUNISHED** FOR MY ARROGANCE.

I WOUND UP **NOT** IN MY  
FAMILIAR ERA, BUT A  
THOUSAND YEARS **LATER**,  
IN THE 41ST CENTURY--A  
CAVEMAN HELPLESSLY  
WANDERING **TOMORROW**.

WITH THE TEACHINGS OF ALL  
HISTORY'S MILITARY AT MY  
FINGERTIPS, **CONTINENTS**  
FELL BEFORE ME.

BUT EVEN A  
**CONQUEROR**  
REQUIRES  
**RESOURCES**.





RECORDS TOLD OF A VAST STORE  
OF PRICELESS GEMSTONES AND  
RARE METALS FROM ACROSS THE  
GALAXY, ALL BURIED WITHIN A  
LONG-FORGOTTEN TOMB...

...ALONG WITH ITS OWNER, EQUALLY  
FORGOTTEN, HIS PITIABLE NAME  
DROWNED OUT BY THE TORRENT OF  
TIME'S RIVERS, WHOEVER HE MIGHT BE.

CURIOUS, I LIFTED THE LID  
OF HIS SARCOPHAGUS TO SEE  
THE FACE OF THE MAN WHOM  
HISTORY HAD ERADICATED.





IT WAS  
MINE.


THAT WAS WHEN  
I DECIDED TIME  
COULD BE--*MUST*  
BE--*REWRITTEN*.

THAT WAS THE  
"GIFT" OF THE  
MOMENT. THAT...

...AND A  
*MASK*.

A PERFECT  
SYMBOL.





A WATCHFUL  
FACE THAT  
IS *FOREVER*  
TIMELESS.

FROM THAT DAY  
FORWARD, ASPIRATION  
BECAME CONVICTION,  
CONVICTION BECAME  
*ZEALOTRY*.

I FEARED  
NOTHING. I BOWED  
TO NO MAN.

LIVE OR DIE, I WOULD  
CARVE A LEGACY THAT  
COULD *NEVER* FALL  
FROM MEMORY.

I WOULD SOW THE NAME  
*KANG* FROM ONE END OF  
SPACE-TIME TO THE *OTHER*,  
AND WOE TO ANY WHO  
WOULD STAND *BEFORE* ME.

THE THUNDER  
THAT SPLITS THE  
SILENCE IS  
ASSURANCE THAT  
MY ENEMIES  
GROW NEAR.

"NO DOUBT THEY  
BELIEVE THEMSELVES  
*PREPARED*. THEY ARE,  
AS EVER, *FOOLS*." I  
HEAR MYSELF SAY...


...AS MY VAST AND  
CURATED ARSENAL  
*VANISHES* BEFORE  
MY VERY EYES.



MY *LIEUTENANTS*  
ARE SUDDENLY NOWHERE  
TO BE *SEEN*.

ONE BY ONE,  
MY *RESOURCES...*





...MY RESOURCES  
TURN TO DUST.

WITH A ROAR AS  
LOUD AS TIME ITSELF  
COLLAPSING...



...THEY  
ARRIVE.







AND FOR THE  
FIRST TIME IN  
RECORDED  
HISTORY...

...I AM  
AFRAID.

**NEXT:  
AVENGERS ASSEMBLED!**



**NEXT**



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